

**State Board of Education
Summary of Transformation Discussion with Vermont Superintendents
December 18, 2007**

Members of the State Board of Education met the afternoon of Tuesday, December 18th with superintendents from around the state to begin a public engagement process regarding the future of education in Vermont. This discussion was kicked off by the release of *The Future of Education in Vermont*, an education transformation discussion document recently adopted by the State Board of Education. Facilitated by Department of Education staff members, superintendents were split into three groups to respond to three questions:

- As you envision a transformed education system, what current practices should be included that best serve the needs of students?
- What new practices should be included?
- What questions, issues, suggestions does the document, *How are the Children?...* raise for you that you would want the State Board to be mindful of in its public policy role and as it moves forward toward next steps in this process?

Superintendents mentioned several *current* practices they felt should be included in a transformed education system.

- representation of all content areas in state academic standards
- Vital Results
- assessment, statewide and local
- local assessment plans
- data-driven decision making
- focus on the “whole child”
- maintaining broad goal of ensuring the health and well-being of children

Superintendents also discussed what *new* practices they would like to see in a transformed education system.

- new curriculum focused on the 21st century as well as new definition of literacy
- greater focus on Vital Results and mastery of content
- individualized learning plans for students
- career awareness and pathways for *all* students
- opportunities for students that align with their own passions and goals; relate students’ passion to learning and academics
- student-centered learning, flexible learning environments, applied learning, doing away with coursework requirements and shift to competencies—not a “one size fits all” approach to teaching and learning
- experiential, hands-on, inquiry based experiences for students
- extended learning time, extended school day, year-round schooling, service-learning, community-based learning; recognition that learning can happen anywhere at any time
- school community is digital and spans all traditional boundaries and borders; teachers must adopt a whole new host of skills so that they can facilitate this process for students

- more flexibility in the system for students and schools
- emphasis on K-12 continuum
- better utilization of technology in schools (including technology professional development for teachers)
- connective tools in rural communities such as technology, broadband, wireless, etc.
- regional meaningful professional development for both new and seasoned teachers; new methods for networking between schools
- teacher leadership
- mentoring for educators
- mentoring for school leadership
- greater public engagement

Superintendents also discussed their general reactions to the document, A Step toward the Transformation of Education in Vermont, and questions it raised for them.

- Challenges mentioned:
 - vision is easier than implementation
 - cost
 - entrenched nature of current system
 - governance structure
 - re-training veteran teachers to relinquish power so that students can direct their own learning
- How do we get the infrastructure in place to facilitate change?
- How do we partner with other groups? (i.e. social services)
- Support for K-12 continuum needed
- Which of the school quality standards need to be represented differently than how they are currently on the books? What would changes to the SQS mean in terms of programs and activities for kids?
- What would education look like if it supported the Vital Results?
- What do we expect to measure through assessment?

Much of the time on the next few State Board monthly meeting agendas will be dedicated to similar conversations with legislators and other political leaders, representatives of the business community and other constituent groups. In past meetings, the State Board has heard from students, parents, educators and principals. The public is encouraged to participate in the process—the desired state document can be viewed and comments can be made at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/future_of_education.html.